

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Specific binding of a foreign core ligand to a PAS domain, wherein the PAS domain is predetermined, prefolded in its native state, and comprises a hydrophobic core that has no NMR-apparent a priori formed ligand cavity, is determined by (a) detecting a first NMR  
5 spectrum of the PAS domain in the presence of a foreign ligand; and (b) comparing the first NMR spectrum with a second NMR spectrum of the PAS domain in the absence of the ligand to infer the presence the ligand specifically bound within the hydrophobic core of the PAS domain.

10 A functional surface binding specificity of a PAS domain, wherein the PAS domain is predetermined, prefolded in its native state, and comprises a hydrophobic core that has no NMR-apparent a priori formed ligand cavity, is changed by (a) introducing into the hydrophobic core of the PAS domain a foreign ligand of the PAS domain; and (b) detecting a change in the functional surface binding specificity of the PAS domain.